

The Republican.

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PLACARD PLOT MANAGED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE QUEEN.

It is now past all doubt, that Castlereagh and his agents have been the sole fabricators of all the violent placards that have been disseminated throughout the country, to instigate the people to insurrection. This fellow longs for another such a scene as he produced in Ireland; he wants to be a hanging, shooting, flogging, and beheading, by wholesale; the occasional operations at the Old Bailey, and provincial gaols, are not sufficient to glut his insatiate thirst for human blood.

Mr. Hume's motion in the Common Necessary House, on the subject of these placards, and the conduct of Sir Robert Baker, in discharging a traitor without bail or examination, drew forth from Castlereagh, what I consider a complete confession of co-operation, although it was ironical. Castlereagh began by ridiculing the motion, and concluded by saying that he should feel himself disgraced to serve a government that could be guilty of such conduct, as to excite opposition to itself. His observation may be transposed a little to make it perfect truth, namely, that any other than such government, would be disgraced in the employment of such a man as Castlereagh. The connection of Fletcher and Castlereagh is as clear as the conspiracy against the Queen; and it is well known that there have been no societies among the Reformers that were foolish enough to throw away money for such a purpose. Where could the money come from, unless it was from the secret-service money. Those placards are very expensive.

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things, both in printing and sticking up, and no individual would have been mad enough to waste his own property on such means. The question of Castlereagh, whether Hone, Wooler, and Carlile, could not supply a sufficiency of such commodity without the aid of the government, was but a party shift. Whatever Hone, Wooler, or Carlile, have printed, it has been openly sold at a fair profit. They don't print and pay for disseminating it after, as Castlereagh does with the public plunder; first rob the people of two thirds of their earnings, and then apply the proceeds of such robbery to set the same people to cut each others throats. It requires a villain as accomplished as Castlereagh to do this.

It is now pretty clear, that the immense mass of hand-bills which were circulated in Scotland, on the 1st of April last, were the product of Castlereagh and his agents. Wilson, Baird, and Hardie, have been murdered solely from this cause. There is no doubt but that Castlereagh, Sidmouth, and Edwards, got up the Cato-street affair, which caused the murder of Thistlewood, Tidd, Ings, Brunt, and Davidson.

The object of Castlereagh has been two-fold—he has either hoped to instigate a premature insurrection, and crush it by the slaughter of a few thousands, or by such sham plots and conspiracies, to alarm the timid part of the community with ill-grounded and misplaced fears, and get them to look another way whilst his hand is in their pockets! If anything was wanting to convince us of the connection of Castlereagh and Sidmouth with this Fletcher, it would be that they have, after 10 or 12 days consideration, offered £200 for the apprehension of the latter. At the first application to that effect by Mr. Pearson, Sidmouth said, he did not see any occasion for the Government to interfere; but they had no sooner sent Mr. Pearson on a wrong scent, and secured Fletcher by some other means, than they come forward with an offer of £200 for his apprehension! They had proclamations ready printed for the Cato-street affair, because they themselves had made the whole arrangement. These proclamations were posted all over the town by day-light the next morning, and a Gazette printed, offering the reward of £1,000 for Thistlewood, when the pretended plot exploded but a few hours before. There is not a doubt but the sum of £1,000 was the bargain made with Edwards for the life of Thistlewood, for Castlereagh and

Sidmouth well knew that he was to be led into any scheme by the agency with which they had surrounded him.

Dennis O'Bryen, of Craven-street, a Sinecurist of £800 per annum, appears to have been the more immediate agent of Castlereagh; Fletcher has been but a subordinate in this Placard Plot. This Dennis O'Bryen, it appears, was a sprig of the Whig Administration, in 1806; but when the Whig thieves were kicked out of power, Mr. Dennis offered his services to the Tory thieves, and since that time, he has furnished most of the beauties of the Morning Post. This O'Bryen is probably the author of the placards, for it is not to be denied that they have been well drawn up to answer the purpose intended. Fletcher has had to find the printer and bill-sticker, and Castlereagh has paid the piper with the secret service money. This is a pretty secret service indeed; but it is vain to comment upon it—nothing short of a radical reform can set things right in this country. A change of Ministers would only increase the number of public and legal thieves, without lessening a jot of the burthens and miseries of the country.

It is this Dennis O'Bryen that has employed so many of the Billingsgate flowers to decorate the pages of the Morning Post, and to slander the Queen. It is this Dennis O'Bryen that has called her a hag—that has proposed to make a martyr of her, whether right or wrong. It is this Dennis O'Bryen, under the superintendance of Castlereagh, that has been trying to lay the plot for an accusation of Treason against her Majesty. We know that apartments in the Tower have been ready furnished and prepared for her, from the commencement of the Mock Trial. Castlereagh knows that it is necessary to destroy her Majesty, to save his place and his head, and he will stick at no scheme for that object.

It appears that Dennis O'Bryen, when at Bow Street, boasted of his thirty years acquaintance with Birnie, the Magistrate. There is no doubt of it. This Police Office has been the centre of espionage from its origin. It was established for that purpose, and for the manufacture of crime. It has been a nursery for thieves of every description:—its officers have never hesitated to share the booty with all the rogues of London, nor to send their accomplices to the gallows, when it was necessary to delude the public a little.

These men have been the accomplices of Vaughan, Brock, Pelham, Power, Edwards, Fletcher, and Dennis O'Bryen, not forgetting Oliver and Castles.

We have no fear but that the diligence of Mr. Pearson will further unravel this plot. The business is in the right hand if any thing further be necessary to be done. It has been fairly and clearly traced to Castlereagh's office, and the moment we read his speech in answer to Mr. Hume's motion, we exclaimed this fellow pleads guilty. It was not a subject that an honest man would treat ironically. It is well known that a bold rogue or thief will attempt to laugh off the first accusation against him, and treat the accuser with a sneer of contempt; but this is not the way an honest man seeks to rebut a false charge. He takes up the business seriously, craves an investigation, throws himself open to every species of examination, and feels the wound if that investigation be neglected in the slightest instance. How different is the conduct of Castlereagh, he stops the avenue to the least enquiry and tells Mr. Hume to try what the Court of King's Bench will do. The Judges of the Court of King's Bench are as much the tools of Castlereagh, as are the Bow-street magistrates, or **Dennis O'Bryen and Fletcher.**

EDITOR.

Dorchester Gaol, Oct. 18, 1820.

TO THE PUBLIC.

In consequence of the verdict of Guilty given against Mrs. Carlile for selling Sherwin's Life of Paine, and No. 9, Vol. I. of the Republican. She is now liable to banishment by serving in the shop according to our glorious constitution. The business will therefore be managed by Mary Ann Carlile, the sister of R. Carlile, on the behalf of the infant children, or rather on the behalf of the whole family. In case the house — Fleet-street, should again be exposed to the violence of the legal thieves, the business will be opened as near the spot as possible immediately, of which due notice will be given. As this kind of business might be said to be renewed every week, at least, it depends on the periodical publications, we can begin any where with half an hour's preparation, and laugh at the Vice Society, and all the influence they can use against it. If one web be destroyed, a few hours' work will spin another stronger and better than before. This is the only way of meeting the persecuting thieves, and I hope and trust that Mrs. Davison will follow the steps of Mrs. Carlile. If half a dozen persons were resolved successively to oppose the Vice Society, their prosecutions would become of the greatest advantage to the propagation of good principles. I will expose every branch of my family, that will listen to my advice, to the venom of this society, with the confidence, that in a few months we shall triumph over them. I have to add, that Mrs. Carlile is quite as composed and unconcerned as I was last year, and I now call upon my sister to perform her part in the same manner. The thieves have the power to shut up 55, but they cannot prevent the opening of 56, so let them go on. Their prosecutions are my joy and comfort, particularly whilst I can see one of my family opposed to them. For my own part, I am resolved never to cease, in consequence of any laws that come short of putting to death, in the open avowal and promulgation of such opinions as I conceive to be founded in truth, and the practice of which appear to me to be conducive to the interest of society. It matters nothing to me what another man thinks. I claim the same right to think and speak, and to write what I think, and to publish what I write as he does. I will never truckle to

opinions propagated by force and violence because it is *prima facie* acknowledgment that they are founded in falsehood and cannot bear the scrutiny of a rational criticism. I contend that there is no necessity for laws to regulate opinions in society; a diversity of opinion with mutual toleration will form the most stable base of its well being. But when we see men crushing the propagation of certain opinions, because the opposite are productive of profit to them, it is no longer society, but a nest of robbers who prey upon the weaker part. However I shall hope to see the imprisonment of Mrs. Carlile and Mr. Davison produce half a dozen new shops in the same line.

R. CARLILE.

Dorchester Gaol, Oct. 18, 1820.

CONCLUSION OF THE MOCK TRIAL OF THE QUEEN.

The Ignobles will very soon be called upon to exercise what they call their honour in voting for a Queen or no Queen. The Counsel on both sides will have done their task by the time this goes to the press, and we may expect some time next week, to have the first decision upon it. We have no further observations to make upon the evidence, than that every kind of influence has been used upon the Continent to prevent any one coming over on the behalf of her Majesty, and much important evidence has been effectually prevented.

Mr. Attorney General Gifford tried to get an adjournment again, for the purpose of giving the famous cousin of Lord Castlereagh, the gallant Colonel Brown, an opportunity of telling their Lordships that he had not been guilty of all those naughty tricks imputed to him. That he had not made free with Majocchi's wife, and charged the expenses of the compensation, and the satisfying Majocchi's conscience, to the Milan Commission. That the Times Newspaper is a very libellous paper in saying such abominable things of so immaculate a person as the cousin of my Lord Castlereagh, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Seditious and Treasonable Pla-
cards, &c. &c.

We shall be able to enter more at large into this subject, when we see the result of the first division amongst the Ignobles. The country is fully alive to all the machinations that have been at work to run down the Queen, and they are now fully sensible that she is innocent of all the charges brought against her, and that the whole has been the effect of a conspiracy for the gratification of an abandoned and profligate husband.

The amiable *je ne me rappelle pas* has been put to the bar and further convicted of perjury and lying, by a milliner from Switzerland, but this second examination was almost superfluous as her testimony was knocked to pieces before.

Mr. Powell has been obliged to submit the extracts of his letters from Colonel Brown respecting Rastelli's escape, wherein the Colonel calls Rastelli a shuffler, and clearly points out that he is afraid to return again to England. The fever is all a bugbear. He says he does not like the manner of being confined in Cotton Garden !

THE TRIAL OF THE MOCK EDITOR.

QUEEN.

TRIAL OF MRS. CARLILE.—VERDICT AS USUAL, GUILTY.

On Monday last, the trial of Mrs. Carlile came on at Guildhall, before Mr. Justice Best, for selling a copy of two publications, of which her husband had previously sold some thousands without bearing any complaint against them. The two publications which were included in the same indictment were Sherwin's Life of Thomas Paine, and No. 9, Vol. 1. of the Republican. Sherwin's Life of Paine is the only book of the kind that has done justice to the man, and the Aristocrats cannot endure that any thing but slander should be promulgated relative to Paine. However, the conviction of Mrs. Carlile shall not stop the struggle : the name of Paine shall rise superior to all opposition, and be pronounced the brightest of all the bright ornaments that this country has hitherto produced, and continue so long as Britain shall be visible as an inhabited island.

In consequence of Mrs. Carlile's trial coming on late in the day, and after the trial of Mr. Davidson, which, for the noble and manly conduct of the defendant, excited much interest, the newspapers have given but a very brief report of it, so that I am debarred from making any observations on the defence set up by Mr. Hill. As I have said before, I am satisfied there was an ample defence to induce a honest Jury to acquit, and with a packed or selected Jury, a defence is no consideration. With them the consideration is, how they can best

profit themselves. For my part I have resolved that no twelve men, be they honest or dishonest, shall ever regulate my opinions, or what opinions I think proper to print and publish. They may suppress a book under one title, but I can print the same opinions under another title, and so far the laws regarding opinions are a mere nullity, further than they inflict punishment on individuals, or misery on families.

It appears that Mr. Gurney, the Counsel for the Vice Society, is made, by the report, to lament the necessity of prosecuting the woman, and goes on to observe, but if that woman, unmoved by the lenity which the prosecutors had shown to her—unwarned by the fate which had attended her husband—would persist in violating the law, the law must be vindicated.

Pray, Mr. Gurney, what lenity have the prosecutors shown to her? Was there any lenity in dragging a woman, with an infant child a few weeks old, from her home by a warrant, merely to obtain bail? If the Vice Society had felt any thing like a lenient disposition towards her, as a woman in that situation, why, would it not have been sufficient to intimate without an arrest that bail would be required? You and your employer's lenity, Mr. Gurney, would be to destroy the whole family, if you had the power to do it. Talk of lenity indeed! You all know well that the publications for which Mrs. Carlile has been persecuted, did not proceed from her as the publisher, neither had she the least controul over the publication. I have no hesitation in saying, that I do not believe that a single pamphlet has ever been published from that shop as an original, but that you might, with your mode of packing juries, have found a verdict against it. For my own part, I should be sorry to write or publish any thing that would find the approbation of such men as Wilberforce, Gambier, Kenyon, Sidmouth, the bench of Bishops, or the Judges, or Gurney, the barrister. Ye are all a gang of immoral persecuting hypocrites. The very worst of hypocrites, because your profession and practice is quite opposite.

Could Mrs. Carlile have imagined in January last, that she was violating any law in selling a single copy of two publications, of which her husband had published large editions the year before, without hearing any complaint. I declare candidly, that I could never have dreamt that Sherwin's Life of Paine would have been selected for prosecution. If there be any thing in that book beyond what the Judge and Mr. Gurney call fair discussion, I am at a loss to conceive their meaning. There is no reviling the truths of scripture there. There is no attack upon any thing sacred. No, it is a book that is calculated to convey correct notions of what was the real character and disposition of Paine. Well, well, Mr. Gurney, you shall have a cheaper edition of the Memoirs of Paine within a month: one would have thought the price of 7s. 6d. would have satisfied you. I will try what a shilling edition will do to please or perplex you, for I am quite indifferent which takes place.

"Unwarned by the fate that has attended her husband" cry you, Mr. Gurney. Let me beg leave to assure you, that the husband has been the sole means of influencing Mrs. Carlile in keeping open the shop: she has acted entirely in deference to his most earnest entreaties and wishes, and he will do her the justice to say, that he sincerely and affectionately believes, that she has neither consulted her own will or interest on the subject. I have endeavoured to impress upon the mind of Mrs. Carlile, that your prosecutions have raised me into an importance, that I had not expected; and that it is now only necessary, that I should struggle boldly with you to ensure both fame and competency in the decline of life. My fate! I never was happier. I never was so well employed for my own future interest before! I have never once regretted my imprisonment or the cause of it. I have now passed twelve months in prison, and I sometimes fear that the gates will be thrown open before I am fully prepared, or before I have accomplished the first object of my desire. I mean improvement as to education. If any thing has given me pain it has been the idea that my wife, my sisters, my aged mother (now gone) or my friends might feel pain from my situation. I believe it shortened the days of my mother, but I have this consolation, that had she lived longer, it would have been in pain of body, and feeling this herself she rather wished than dreaded to part with life. No, no, Mr. Gurney, Mrs. Carlile has not been warned to evade my fate, but to follow it. She has done it nobly, and in a manner that has strengthened my affections towards her. I tell you frankly, that I have felt more solid happiness as a married man, within this last year, than all the former years of my wedded life. I have been delighted to think that I had a wife that would struggle in a cause next my heart in deference to my opinions and wishes, and in some measure in opposition to her own. It will form the ground work of my future happiness and satisfaction.

Do what you like with Mrs. Carlile, you shall not suppress those opinions. Libel prosecutions are calculated to propagate any desired opinions, much swifter than the faggots and tortures of olden time. Ever since I have been a bookseller or publisher, my first desire has been prosecution for libels. I have seen the importance of it in so many instances where a stand has been made, that whether the verdict be guilty, or not guilty, is but a secondary object with me. I will pursue my object until prosecution for matter of opinion be dropped, or if they exceed the period of my life, I hope my children will follow my example. So long as a pretended omnipotent religion stands in need of the protection of the law, so long shall I be its enemy, and no longer; and Mr. Gurney, Mr. Best, and the Vice Society, may vindicate the law, and the religion of the law, as long as they think proper, which I expect will be just as long as they find it conducive to their own interest. I don't believe that Best is a Christian in ~~mind~~ any more than I am: he is a Christian according to law; Judge Abbott is an avowed Deist in the company of his private circle of friends;

and I know that he did all he could to dissuade Castlereagh from prosecuting the Age of Reason last year, and that a long correspondence took place between them on the subject. But Castlereagh would be master, and Mr. Chief Justice is but his servant.

The only further notice I can take of Mrs. Carlile's trial, for want of a report, is the observation of Mr. Justice Best, as to what women had gained by the propagation of the Christian religion: he says, "he could not but be astonished at seeing a woman stand forward as the opponent of that system from which every thing valuable to woman was derived. It was strange to see a woman forgetting, that before Christianity prevailed, her sex had been but slaves to the passions of their masters; that Christianity had raised her at least to a level with man—had made her his companion and his equal in this world, and the joint partaker of his hopes in the next."

Pray, Mr. Best, are the women of England, a jot more free than were the women of Rome, during the republic? Are they a jot more free than were the women of Greece? Are they more free than were the women in the German and Gothic tribes, before the birth of the Christian Mythology? Do we find by history, that the Jewish women were ever less free than the Christian women are now-a-day? If you had intended to have made a simile that would not have borne contradiction, you should have contrasted the Christian with the Mahometan women. The latter, I believe, are not allowed to possess souls, or to enter Paradise! Mrs. Carlile knows nothing about what prevailed before Christianity prevailed; and I believe there are but few women that trouble themselves to enquire. Therefore, she could not forget any thing of the kind, Mr. Best. But I hope your lesson will make her doubly grateful for her elevated condition; and by your permission, or by the permission of the law, I will take her to Heaven with me. I believe I have promised too much, too, for I am a candidate for Mahomet's Paradise, and I am letting my beard grow to be in the fashion when I get there, lest the lack of beard should be an object of ridicule among the fair, black-eyed, and virgin Hours. Go, Mr. Best, Mr. Gurney, and the Vice Society, and teach your royal master what the Christian religion has done for wives. I have never desired to degrade Mrs. Carlile: my object and wish has been to elevate her. The King stands in need of your advice, or your prosecution for libel.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PROFITS OF THE JOINT STOCK COMPANY.

Dr. Lushington has helped us to an appropriate epithet for the prosecutors of the Queen, the *Joint Stock Company*, formed for the laudable purpose of *degrading the Queen, and destroying the Throne!* This epithet presents the perfect whole of what has hitherto been considered a *shapeless monster*! The exact number of the share-holders with the number and value of their respective shares, it may be impossible for us to ascertain, without a view of the books, which the Company may not

chuse to produce. But in a pamphlet recently published by Mr. Mills, we have a list of those who may be called the *Directors* of this *Company*, with a few explanatory comments, which we shall here abridge.

1. The Queen's fourteen avowed Prosecutors then in the Cabinet are as follow.

1. *The Earl of Liverpool.* The origin of this Lord was from a Lawyer to a Baron 34 years ago, with a transition to the Earldom 24 years since. This Earl and family derive from the public annually the sum of 33,450*l.* Multiplying this 33,450*l.* by only 24 years, although for more than 50 years past this family has received the public money, we have the sum of 804,940*l.* as paid to this servant's family.

2. *Lord Eldon.* The origin of this Lord in his own lifetime like the sinful Mr. Bergami, was the result of his own merit or adventures. He was the son of a coal-fitter at Newcastle, and recommended himself to the notice of his superiors as a fit tool for the *company*! by declaring that he was ready to sacrifice the King to its interests, on the trial of Mr. Hardy, in the following words,—"If the KING SHOULD CONSENT to act with any representation OTHERWISE than it is now constituted, he OUGHT to die, and I TRUST IN GOD HE WOULD DIE." This Lord and family derive from the public annually the sum of 50,400*l.* Calculating that this lawyer has enjoyed the family revenue for only 25 years, it would amount without interest of money to 1,260,000*l.*

3. *WESTMORELAND, E. (Fane).* This Earl and Family derive from the public annually the sum of 51,650*l.* Supposing this income to have lasted 10 years it amounts to 516,500*l.*

4. *The Earl of Harrowby.* Nobility was first conferred upon this family of the lower order by the late King, the Earldom given by the advice of the present ministers. This Earl and family derive 11,902*l.*

Supposing this worthy president only to have enjoyed his income to himself and relatives from 1791, when he was Paymaster of the Forces, his receipts would be 345,158*l.*

5. *Viscount Sidmouth.* This is another of the Baron Bergami's rivals, who has had the good fortune to raise himself by his talents. He remained a lower order man till 1805, when his good friends in office filled his veins with noble blood, and for his patriotic services to his country he draws from her ignoble blood, 17,025*l.*

Supposing this profound statesman to have received his present income for himself and family 20 years, although he has been in the receipt of the public money a great deal longer, they would have received 340,500*l.*

6. *Viscount Castlereagh,* of the ancient family of the wicked Bergamis; that is, one of those who can date their rank from their merit. No one can tell what this man has amassed or guess what his influence is worth in pounds sterling. His father and family are said to possess the following income, but Lord Castlereagh himself has had, it appears between 80,000*l.* and 40,000*l.* a year spent upon his missions alone.—28,255*l.*

7. *Earl Bathurst* left the lower orders in the year 1772, and condescends to receive with a noble title for himself and family at the hands of the people, 35,428*l.*

If this income be correctly stated in 20 years, it would amount to 708,460*l.* of the public money.

8. *Right Honourable Nicholas Vansittart,* the paper Chancellor of the paper Exchequer, a very religious good character, having a punning snug income of his own, of only 7,500*l.* a year, but as his brother in

law does the country the honor of reckoning an income to his family of 32,335l. a year, we will e'en take the family income of Lord Auckland, at 17 years enjoyment, amounting to 452,690l.

9. Viscount Melville, *made noble* in 1802. The present income of this nobleman's family is 18,776l.

Which, if received for eighteen years, would amount to 337,968l.

10. Duke of Wellington, ennobled by the present ministers for his military prowess. This noble lord, thanks to the brave soldiers he commanded, has obtained a noble reward. His pensions amount to 12,531l.; and this man has already cost the country more than a million of money. —65,741l.

11. Right Honourable Charles Bathurst (brother-in-law to Lord Sidmouth). It is alleged that the Queen added Bergami's sister, the Countess of Oldi, to her suite, but her Majesty thereby only placed one lady in office, at least she did not take two old women out of one family.

12. Right Hon. W. W. Pole (not yet ennobled), brother to the Marquis of Wellesley and Duke of Wellington. This gentleman is Master of the Mint, and joint Remembrancer of Court of Exchequer in Ireland, in addition to his own income, stated to be 12,450l. the Marquis and his family are said to enjoy 30,855l. per year, which for 20 years would amount to 866,100l.

13. Right. Hon. F. G. Robinson, whose family income is stated at 4,775l.

14. Last, though not least, of the Cabinet, the Right Hon. George Canning. This gentleman's noble birth placed along side Mr. Bergami, elevates the latter at once into a Baron, inasmuch as the comparison is no longer between nominal titles or royal distinctions, but between the base born and the free. The mission of this Right Hon. Gentleman to Lisbon, where he held the sinecure situation of ambassador, cost the country 18,000l.

This may be considered as the board of management of this Joint Stock Company; and "*out of the Cabinet*," we have the following list of active auxiliaries, with their reasons, and they are *ample* enough, for the prosecution of the Queen.

MINISTERS OUT OF THE CABINET.

Lord Cholmondeley,	£10,050	Hertford,	34,758
Montrose,	4,286	Palmerston,	2,480
Chichester,	9,000	Salisbury,	6,400
Rt Hon. Long,	3,500	Wallace,	1,800
Oakes,	5,000	Huskisson,	2,400
Sir R. Gifford,	6,000	Sir I. S. Copley,	4,000

The sum total of the advantages of these twenty-six servants of the Crown, alias Masters of the Joint Stock Company, is £488,399 !!!!! The annual advantages of 164 more out of 225 of her Majesty's Judges, amount to £1,280,252!!!! And the patron of the Society, receives, for his share, £595,000 per annum!!!! Was there ever heard of so profitable a Joint Stock Company before? Well might Lord Eldon threaten to kill the King, if he should dare to use his reason, to the

prejudice of the Company; but trifles light as air, often destroy the most deliberate machinations; and his policy will indeed be mortified, if a Queen should avenge the cause of an insulted King, and a woman be the means of obtaining freedom for an enslaved people!

CONTINUATION OF REPLY TO THE REV. THOMAS HARTWELL HORNE'S PAMPHLET, ENTITLED "DEISM REFUTED."

[Concluded from p. 288.]

From the son of God one might have expected some proof of the resurrection of the human race, particularly as he knew the question of the Sadducees was a mere bait for the purpose of trying his opinions on that subject; but the answer is an evasion, a mere shuffle, it is nothing applying to the question. Some of the new fangled Christians, such as the Unitarians and Freethinkers, merely believe that Jesus was sent to give the human race an exemplary proof of the resurrection. Do they find a support for their idle notions in the last extract, where Jesus is challenged to the point by those who disbelieved the immortality of man? Or how can they reconcile the rejection of all the miracles attributed to Jesus, and embrace that only of the resurrection? I could never feel any thing like charity towards these sort of Christians, to me they appear anxious to establish a new fangled priesthood, that retains the title of Christian merely to evade the penal laws which are in force.

I find nothing worthy of notice in the remainder of this book of Matthew; Jesus is charged with blasphemy by the Jews, and put to death as an innovator on established customs and opinions. He is made to rise again from the dead, and then to converse with his disciples as before; but this gospel does not send him to heaven nor give us any account of his end, therefore this story is but half told, and yet this was the original root of what is called Christianity; all the other gospels are mere branches from this root on which some new and additional lies have been grafted. Surely this book needs no comment for the exposure of its falsehood, or for a proof that it is a silly romance, it would be sufficient if we could pro-

cure it a calm and unprejudiced reading, with a mind resolved to free itself from superstition and to enquire after truth.

I have gone through the book of Matthew, (for it is a perversion of words to call it Gospel, which signifies, a true saying) and, if it be asked why I have not been more particular in noticing the several tales in it, I answer, because, I have a solemn conviction on my mind that every tale which speaks of the appearance of God in any shape or manner, or of angels, or of devils, or of what is commonly called ghosts or spirits ; or of miracles, such as are said to be supernatural ; or of prophecies ; or of any thing that is not strictly natural, is nothing more than the invention of man, and cannot lay claim to our attention, much less our credence. I record this conviction with a hope that every reflecting mind will receive it as a sufficient reason why I should have treated those tales so lightly, or in some instances to have passed them unnoticed. It is impossible to offer argument against them further than by saying, that the laws of nature warrant us in not believing any thing of the kind ; and we can only attest the falsehood of such tales by this authority, and no other. We have one thing in evidence against the truth of those tales, and that is, the Christian priests have continued to work all those miracles and to produce all those appearances down to a late period, or rather as long as they found persons credulous enough to believe ; but no sooner did the printing press begin to expand the mind of man with reason in Europe, than those tales or miracles began to vanish, and they have seceded in proportion to the progress of that reason, until we have no prophets, no miracle-workers, no visible gods, angels, devils, ghosts, or spirits, to be seen or heard. It has been altogether priestcraft, from the first to the last, a species of successful imposture by which millions of priests have led an idle life, and have supported themselves in splendour by the plunder of the industrious part of mankind. They have endeavoured to propagate a notion that they are the teachers of morals, but it is altogether a false assertion ; mankind would have been naturally moral, if they had not been corrupted by kingcraft and priestcraft. The majority of priests in all ages have displayed a decidedly immoral example ; and we well know, that where precept issues from an opposite example, it proves of no avail. Their pretended moral precepts have been a mere delusion, and have been used only as a necessary prop to their impos-

tures. Morals must proceed from a less impure source to be observed, or to impress the mind of man with any force. Virtue and morality are now struggling with religion, not in conjunction but in opposition, and every sincere advocate of the former must wish for the downfall of the latter.

It will not therefore be expected, that I should take more than a cursory view of the next three books, the book of Mark, the book of Luke, and the book of John.

The book of Mark is but a compendium of the book of Matthew, with some few tales in addition, and others a little varied. It is admitted by all who have studied the early history of Christianity, that Matthew's book was the first extant, and the only book of the kind for some years. Its existence cannot be traced to any period before the destruction of Jerusalem; and we do not find any of the Epistles in the New Testament make mention of it, which could not have failed being done had it been known. Thus it appears, that it was not until the Christians had become numerous, that they formed this new fangled fanaticism into any direct form or shape; and this may in some measure account for the variety of Gospels, as they were called, and so many different stories as were floating about Jesus before the time of Constantine. Every district, province, or church, formed its own tales on this head, and Gospels and Epistles were as numerous and various as churches and chapels.

It has been said that Mark was the follower of Peter, but there is not the slightest proof of any thing of the kind; and I am inclined to think that the stories about those persons who are called the twelve disciples of Jesus, and the story of Jesus himself, are either fabulous, or, at least, a little fact mixed up with much fable. The whole Christian world has been famous for the invention of lies and wonderful tales, which habit was unquestionably borrowed from the Jews, as the first Christians were nothing more than one of those sects of the Jews, who, instead of believing the Messiah was to come, asserted that he had been. When it was found that this notion made but little progress among the Jews, its supporters began to preach it to the Gentiles, as they were called, for they were like every other sect of fanatics, they received converts from all sources, and it mattered not as to character or morals, so that they could but increase their numbers. We have nothing like authentic history of any

thing that passed among the Christians before they were incorporated by the Emperor Constantine, and the Christian religion superseded the Pagan, as the religion of the Roman empire. Every document that we have on the subject is either fabricated, interpolated, or altered. All works that bore a direct opposition to the Christian religion have been destroyed, and we have no other guide but that of the party whose pretensions we are bound in common honesty to doubt.

I shall now make such observations as arrest my attention in the book of Mark, and those will be rather humorous than serious.

Mark says nothing about Jesus fasting in the wilderness, but that he was forty days with wild beasts and angels.

In the third chapter we are told that Jesus surnamed two of his disciples Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder: a whimsical epithet to proceed from the son of God, most assuredly!

In the fifth chapter we are told that a legion of devils possessed one man who dwelt among the tombs, and that this man could not be bound with fetters and chains, for, that by the aid of this legion of devils, he tore them asunder. This legion is somewhat like the Trinity in Unity, for Jesus is made to address the legion, which in the same place is described to be many, as an unclean spirit, and to bring him out of the man: when Mr. Legion requests permission that he and all his subdivisions might be allowed to enter the herd of swine! It is not my intention to point out the contradictions of the four books called the Gospels, I have too much contempt for the whole to attempt any thing of the kind; but being on this subject of the devils and the swine, I would observe, that Matthew said they were two men who possessed devils and dwelt among the tombs, and that these two devils entered the herd of swine and drove them into the sea; but Mark speaks of one man possessing a legion of devils, and says that the number of swine were two thousand: from this we are left to infer, that the man possessed had two thousand devils in him! In another place we shall find Jesus talking about a legion of angels at his command if he should want their assistance, it will be sufficient to observe on this head, that the word legion is borrowed from the Roman army, which was divided into legions, just as the English army is divided into regiments: only that the legions were more in number, comprising many thousands.

I have asserted that there were a variety of accounts afloat in the several early Christian Churches as to who or what was Jesus; that the Book of Matthew is believed to have been the first written document of the kind, and that every one told his story in his own way, so much so, that the Christians soon found it necessary to hold general councils to affix the stamp of their authority on what was authentic as the word of God, and what was spurious. I have also mentioned that Mark, whose name is fixed to the foregoing book, has been said to have been the immediate disciple of Peter, but that we have no proof of any thing of the kind, nor at what particular period any of these books were written. That there were a multitude of those books afloat when Luke wrote his, he tells us at the beginning in the following words:

“ Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us. Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”

The above extract forms a sufficient proof that it was written at a distant period from the time in which the things are said to have happened, which the book speaks of: it also proves that there were various writings of the same kind without charging any of them as being spurious, and it further evidently appears to have been Luke's object to condense the various tales or writings into one, for by a close examination it will be found that he embraces all that we find in the books of Matthew and Mark, with some variations and additions of his own, or copies from other books not now extant. Luke introduces Jesus in a very different manner from either of the other Gospel writers, for he has a name for the angel that caused Elizabeth and Mary to conceive. Matthew has done it all by dreams, and Mark and John say nothing of this mysterious and miraculous conception*. The difference between

* Peter Annett, a Clergyman, who became sceptical on this subject in the course of the last century, asserted that the angel Gabriel was some brisk and gallant young fellow who practised the trick successfully on Elizabeth and Mary. Celsus, the Roman, who opposed the Christian

Luke's genealogy of Jesus and that of Matthew has been a fatal objection to either of their books being a Gospel. They both make Joseph the father of Jesus, and yet they would in the same breath fain make a cuckold of him to keep up the story of divinity and miraculous conception in their Man-God. This difference in the genealogy must be also a fatal objection to all the pretended genealogies of the Jews. It is said that Herod destroyed all the genealogies that were kept in the Temple as public records, that his low birth might not be discovered, hence we might infer that the two genealogies we have in the New Testament are both fabrications, and the difference in the names must support that inference. The case is, the Jews had their holy books, and they, as a matter of course, connected all the public characters with the names in these books in just the same manner as Mahomet traces his lineage back to Abraham, through Ishmael.

It is an utter impossibility to record the genealogies of a whole nation, even if the real fathers of the children could be relied upon ; the business would be too intricate, and as to its importance, it is ridiculous in the extreme. For instance, Jesus is made to descend through all the rogues and whores that are mentioned in the Old Testament. The first instance is the incest of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar ; the next is that of Ruth, and her mother-in-law Naomi, seducing Boaz ; the next the fruit of those murderers and adulterers, David and Bathsheba ; and we are not told whether the issue of Solomon be from one of his three hundred wives or seven hundred concubines, but even in the last instance he is suggested to be the offspring of adultery. A noble descent ! Luke has also given us that true specimen of the Christian Religion, and for my part I have not a doubt but the sentence was written after the new sect had made some progress, and its effect began to be visible. If any thing can entitle the book to the

religion, says that Jesus was the fruit of an intrigue between Mary and a Roman soldier named Panthers ; and St. Ambrose asserted that the Holy Ghost got Mary with child through the ear to preserve her virginity. Other saints have contended for other methods, but I disbelieve all such nonsense, as well as the original or authorized tales. It forms a proof that a commentary on such idle tales must be as ridiculous as the tales themselves. The reader might find a variety of nonsense and amusement on this head in a work lately published entitled the Apocryphal New Testament.

epithet of Gospel it is the following quotation from the twelfth chapter:—

“ Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division; for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

This is a true picture of the Christian Religion; it is what it ever has been and ever will be, whilst it continues to disgrace mankind.

Luke has several stories in his book which are not to be found in the others, particularly that of the good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the rich man and Lazarus; this latter tale I insert.

“ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

From this tale it would appear that the Christian Heaven and Hell, were as contiguous as the Elysian fields and the infernal regions of the Pagan Mythology, so that a person situa-

ted in one place could converse with another in the other place. It would be well if we could get a more precise account where this heaven and hell are situated. Those who talk so confidently about it, ought certainly to be more explicit, and point out its geographical position in space. Shew me where heaven is, and I will soon become a candidate for it. To be sure the Son of God is made to tell this tale, or one might wonder how it was brought upon earth. The whole of this denunciation against rich men and persons of property, was a mere trick with the early preaching Christians to get hold of the property among themselves, that they and their followers might live in idleness. The possession of property can never affect the moral character of any man, provided he does not make it an instrument of power and oppression. There is one truth in what is called Scripture, that to whom much is given much is expected in the shape of example and moral assistance to their fellows, but poverty is the handmaid of crime and theft ; it is poverty which degrades the man by debasing the mind, and fills it with an apathy to all that is good and desirable in life. Let man once enjoy the whole fruit of his labour in a country free from taxes, and we shall find crime abate as well as wretchedness. Under those considerations I don't think there is any thing worthy notice in the moral of the above tale. It was the position of Hell and Heaven that drew my attention to it.

I find nothing that is further deserving of notice in the book of Luke, it is a repetition of the former books with some variations and additions. There is nothing like harmony now in the four books called Gospels if they were submitted to a fair criticism, but even in their present state they have gone through repeated corrections for that purpose. Dr. Mills tells us that there is a public record of their having been reconciled and corrected in the sixth century during the consulship of Messalla, at the order of the Emperor Anastasius. The same learned Doctor has amused himself in searching after the various readings in the various editions, and has enumerated thirty thousand and upwards ! So that they may now be compared to Lord Chancellor Eldon's silk stocking that has been darned all over with worsted until no silk be left.

Luke is supposed to have been the physician of Antioch who followed Paul, but this is all guess work now-a-day, and the less we trouble ourselves on this head, the less error we shall fall into. The rise and progress of the Christian religion

forms a complete labyrinth. There is no clear passage through it.

I now come to the book of John. It has been said of the nominal author of this book, that he was the immediate disciple of Jesus, and that disciple whom Jesus loved above the rest. Polycarp, who was one of the early Christian martyrs, asserts that he had frequent conference with this John at Ephesus, and it is also said that this book was written at Ephesus. This same John is made to be the author of the book of Revelations at the end of the New Testament; and from all these circumstances, I expect to show that this book was not extant in the first century. In the first place, it must be admitted that this book was either written, or has been interpolated by one of the Platonic Christians. The beginning of the book has a direct plagiarism from Plato's writings. It was Plato who first made use of the terms which we find the book of John commences with; thus:—

"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Plato was one of those kind of men who was very fond of rendering every thing very mysterious to the multitude: he was, in fact, little better than a priest. Socrates had taught a simple code of morals and theology; and Plato, who called himself the disciple of Socrates, came, like a demon, to corrupt all that was valuable in the philosophy of his master. Even in the life time of Socrates, Plato was guilty of interpolating and corrupting his writings; and after his death, he annihilated all that was beautiful for its simplicity, in the moral and theological precepts of his master, and set up a new fangled mysterious system of his own. Plato was as much inferior to Socrates in honesty and good intention towards the moral welfare of mankind, as Burke was to Thomas Paine. The close assimilation of Platonism to the early Christianity, was such that it required but a very little concession on each side for direct union. The Platonic philosophy, or rather the Platonic fanaticism and madness, had been current four hundred years when Christianity began to make its appearance, and had made considerable progress through all the Roman provinces. It might be fairly considered a prelude to Chris-

tianity ; for when the followers of the Platonic fanaticism at Rome and other places distant from Greece, first met with the book called John's Gospel, they were struck with admiration at the similarity of ideas, and embraced it instantly. It was the grand impulse to the rise of Christianity above the illiterate multitude. This pretended Gospel of John, and the Epistles of John, abound in that style of writing which has been termed Platonic love ; and the book of Revelations much resembles the Platonic enthusiasm and madness—only the Christian religion is made the ground work of it. I verily believe that all the Epistles we have in the New Testament, were written by those Platonic philosophers ; for I do not believe that there was sufficient ability among the first Christians to produce such writings. Independent of all fanaticism and falsehood, the writers have displayed something like ability or learning, such as prevailed among the Academics. Plato himself had no definitive object for worship : he taught the immortality of the soul, and the existence of a God, or rather Gods ; but Christianity was just the thing to fill up the deficiency of the Platonic fanaticism. They had then a specific object to proceed upon ; and the name of Plato was lost sight of before the more important name of Jesus. Plato as well as Jesus, has been called the son of a virgin.

I find nothing new in the book of John, but the manner of telling the tale ; and like the other books called Gospels, it has its variations and additions. The close of the book forms a sufficient proof that it was not written by the immediate disciple of Jesus, even if there had been such a person, but distinctly alludes to that disciple which Jesus loved, which is said to be John, in a manner that the allusion cannot apply to the author. Speaking of the disciple John, the writer says,

“ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things : and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”

The last sentence in this quotation is sufficient to falsify the whole book, and to impress our minds, with its being a *roma nee*. So ridiculous an assertion could only have been penned by a madman ; and he that has credulity enough to imbibe such an assertion as Gospel, must be something more than *mad*.

I come now to the book called the Acts of the Apostles, which is a continuation of Luke's Gospel, and written by the

same hand. I find nothing here but a repetition of similar matter to that we have passed in the four former books. Sick persons are healed, the dead are raised to life again, and devils are cast out, only that Peter is the principal actor instead of Jesus. Origen, a father of the Christian church, and one of the Platonic Christians, says, that he has seen evil spirits cast out and put to flight by Christians. Josephus says, he has seen it done by a Jew ; and I have heard a Catholic Friar, now living, say that he has seen it done at Rome ! I am inclined to think that if there had been any truth in the existence of devils, I should have had a visit from some of them ere this, otherwise they are very negligent in their pretended offices. This same Catholic Friar paid me the compliment to say that he thought I was a besom in the hand of God, to sweep away all the rubbish that obstructed the progress of the true Catholic church. I hope my besom will not be worn out until all the nonsense is brushed away, both in Catholic and Protestant church, and all other churches, chapels, and conventicles.

We are told by Luke in this book of the Acts of the Apostles, that all who joined the first Christians had to sell their property, and share it in common with others of the sect. This was the practice of the Esseans ; and if this horrid fanaticism had made much progress in its first shape, it would have carried universal misery and destruction with it. Its followers would have been like unto a nest of maggots, that, after devouring all that was common among them, they would have had to devour each other. So strict does this practice of sharing property seem to have been observed, that by way of deterring those who might hold back a trifle in reserve, we are told that Ananias and Sapphira were put to death for it, under the pretence that they had lied to the Holy Ghost ! I am inclined to think that the first sect of Christians were guilty of some horrible measures in support of their fraud. The New Testament has frequent hints at those things, by way of reproof, which must convince us that something very bad existed among them.

I must pass over the story about Peter's being liberated from prison by an angel, about the prison doors being thrown open whilst Paul and Silas were confined, and all miracles in the remainder of this book. I have said enough, I believe, to induce the reader to pronounce it all a lie: There is one circumstance in this book which I consider to be worthy of notice, and displays something like a false mixture of incidents.

I mean the names of Saul and Paul. I could never reconcile myself to think but that these two names originally meant two distinct persons, and formed the subject of two distinct tales. I believe that Luke combined those two tales into one—a circumstance very common with the early Christians, when every thing was compiled from hearsay tales.

The different churches were in the habit of corresponding with each other, and each strove for the mastery in relating miraculous tales, which were well known by the writers to be false, but which made a very great impression on the ignorant congregations of the several churches on whom the imposition was intended. In the course of time, these tales were collected and compiled into something like a regular shape, and have formed all the Gospels, Epistles, and Legends, that have circulated from time to time among Christians. The priests were the grand movers, and they have continued to supply their several congregations with new miracles, even up to the present time, or until reason cried hold—it is enough—your baseness is discovered. But to return to Saul and Paul, I would say, the story is by no means clear. Saul is a Jewish, and Paul a Roman name. Besides, Paul is made to be a complete shuffler, and what has been aptly termed, “all things to all men.” He is a Jew, a Pharisee, a Roman ; and in addressing the Athenians, he is not made to say a word about Jesus Christ, further than by a distant hint about the resurrection. It is probable such a character as Paul might have existed, but he seems to have been a wrangler with all the leading Christians, and preferred travelling about with two or three sisters in the Lord, to the company of any male preachers in the same line !

In the nineteenth chapter of this book we are told that some Jews who were not Christians attempted to cast out some devils in the name of Jesus, but that one of the devils gave them a good thrashing for it ! We have also a tale in this book about Herod arraying himself in his royal apparel, and being on his throne his courtiers hailed him as a god and worshipped him. This is by no means strange, for all courtiers are ready at all times to do the same thing, but in the case of Herod we are told that an angel of the Lord smote him and he died eaten up with worms. If we may rely on Josephus as an historian we have an anachronism here, and what I have before asserted a mixture of tales which were first related of different persons. The first Herod is said to have died a miserable death as here related, but that was in the infancy of

Jesus according to Matthew's book. Josephus relates the tale of Agrippa being hailed as a God by his courtiers and this seems more likely, as the Herod of that time was but a Tetrarch, the Governor of a province, and had no regal title nor royal authority. This is just like the whole of the historical part of the New Testament, it is a collection of traditional and legendary tales put together without order or date, and from time to time has been corrected with the growing intelligence of the age, or as soon as the Christian church became formidable enough to hold a council of Bishops. The Apocryphal New Testament affords ample proof of this assertion.

It is now believed that the Council of Nice which was held during the reign of Constantine, in the fourth century made the final arrangement of the books in the book called the New Testament, and rejected those which are to be found in the Apocryphal New Testament and others that are lost. This can only be viewed as an arbitrary selection of that which was most plausible, and likely to create union among the different sects of Christians,—for wherever Christians have possessed what they call liberty of conscience, they have been split into a multitude of sects and cutting each others throats upon the mere difference of opinion on a word. If there was the least prospect that Christianity so called would infest the earth another thousand years, it would be well for the inhabitants of that period that may come under its dominion, if they were again brought under the power of the Pope, for it is not to be denied that all the working classes of society were better fed when surrounded with Abbeys and Monasteries than they have ever been since. Every new sect that starts up now, begins to prey upon the labouring class of society: for it is not until it can make some little shew, that persons with property will identify themselves with it. Whilst the Pope of Rome was in the plenitude of his power, the whole race of priests and monks were supported by persons possessing property, and the poor were liberally relieved from the surplus, but now every thing seems to conspire to throw the burden both of Church and State upon the produce of the industry of the country. Let me not be misunderstood as advocating the cause of the Pope, I am merely pointing out the least of two evils. I repeat again and again, that I would have no legalised religion whatever. If any portion of the community would voluntarily support a priest from their incomes without compelling another to do the same, they are welcome for me. I wish every thing to rest upon the force of persuasion.

I come now to the various epistles which are attributed to Paul, and before I take further notice of them, I would observe that it is quite uncertain who did write them and at what time they were written. In the epistle to the Colossians, and in the book of Revelations there is a mention of the Church of Laodicea, which has formed a stumbling block to those who stickle for Paul called the Apostle, and John called the Evangelist being the authors. The Church of Laodicea was not founded until the middle of the second century and consequently, if we admit Paul and John to have been of the same age as Jesus, which is by no means an unfair supposition, they could not have lived to witness the rise of this church. The complaint against the Church of Laodicea in the book of Revelations is, that it had grown rich, powerful, and corrupt, and that it had slacked in zeal in the cause of Jesus Christ, by becoming neither hot nor cold. This seems an admission that the Book of Revelations was written a considerable time after the establishment of this Church. There is nothing certain in all the tales of the New Testament, there is nothing certain as to the authenticity of any of the Epistles, for in the early ages of Christianity, forgeries and fabrications were considered meritorious where the ability was sufficient, and by no means a crime or disgrace. Delusion appears to have been the standard of merit, consequently, all its supporters must have been sworn enemies to truth. I will produce a few specimens of this practical delusion from those Epistles. In the seventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians we have the writers opinion about the propriety of marriage: by way of taking up the subject better we will admit Paul to be the writer. I insert the greater portion of the chapter omitting a few sentences in the middle of it that were not connected with the subject of marriage.

" Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me; It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God,

one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband; But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord; If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace. Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh; but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not; let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if

she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God."

I would appeal to any man or woman that possesses a spark of virtue or honesty, to say whether the propositions laid down here on the subject of marriage are not disgusting and pernicious to the morals of society at large. Marriage is certainly an essential to the peace, happiness, and welfare of society, or, at least, it is a requisite among the great majority of all societies: a few exceptions may not be felt. There is no happiness that can be termed social, equal to that enjoyed by male and female in the marriage state, when their tempers are duly regulated and well controuled, and when each strives to please the other with an apparent negligence of self-gratification. But even balancing the evils and disagreements of a marriage state that may here and there exist, against those to which a life of celibacy is exposed, the former I am of opinion will be the lighter. Judgment might be necessary on both sides in chusing a partner, but nature seems to command it; more particularly among the human race, in whom there is a feeling and a love of honour and chastity. It is known past dispute, that in all those early sects of Christians by whom marriage was neglected, there was an indiscriminate intercourse, and if the reader of these Epistles pays due attention, he will discover that the persons to whom they were addressed, must have been a set of vile and corrupt beings, as Paul is continually upbraiding them with fornication and other charges not fit to be mentioned. Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire gives us a full display of the real characters of the early Christians, and convinces us that Christianity at its origin was a weed so rank, that it could not have flourished on any soil less corrupt than the Roman empire or monarchy. At any period of the Roman Republic, it would have been plucked up before it had produced a bud.

I am further of opinion that Paul himself, although said to be a married man, was a gross sensualist and lecher. I have been told that in some of the Greek editions of the New Testament, Peter is made to accuse Paul of making a carnal use of the young women that accompanied him in his journeyings. There is some little clue to this charge remaining in the English edition. The Apocryphal New Testament mentions the names of those young women who travelled with Paul, and in the canonical New Testament, in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul is made to say, "I withstood Peter face to face."

In the ninth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians we have some allusion to a similar subject, it is thus:

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"

This would be a sufficient proof of adultery in an English Court of Law, and instead of saying charity covers a multitude of sins, we should say hypocrisy and fanaticism are made to cover a multitude of sins. I would almost as soon see my wife or sister enter a brothel as a sect of religious fanatics. I should consider chastity as far gone in one instance as the other. I don't like that Platonic love: it is only a cheat upon nature. A squeeze in the hand with "my dear brother or my dear sister in the Lord," I can only construe to be a criminal conversation, and but a step from criminal connection. Priests and confessors have ever been the practical patrons of adultery, for nature will assert her sway over every species of fanaticism, and their trade obliges them to be as secret as possible. The Comedy of the Hypocrite is one of the most useful plays ever produced upon the British stage, and Dr. Cantwell is painted to the life.

The early Christians were instructed to shun philosophy and science as a pest and grievous sin: there are frequent cautions given them in these epistles on this head. To keep the people ignorant has been the object of Christian priests and all other priests from the first to the last. They themselves are quite sensible of being impostors and all their dread is that the mass of the people will discover it. Thus we find the following words in Paul's Epistles:—

"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Those priests preached up charity because they lived by it: but knowledge doth not puff up the mind: it is more than any thing else calculated to do the contrary; to teach man humiliation and the folly of pride and arrogance. It should be reversed, charity puffeth up, but knowledge edifieth. A real believer in the doctrines of Christianity could never have been a philosopher. Philosophy or the study of science naturally

destroys all fanaticism: would a philosopher ever have written such nonsense as the following, from the second epistle to the Corinthians?

“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

What can all this be but delusion? Where is the third heaven? Is this trip to heaven less ridiculous than that of Mahomet's on a white horse? not a jot—and of the two books (the Bible and the Koran) the latter has the most truths and a more impressive moral code.

I have before mentioned that the first Christians expected the end of the world daily, and the second coming of their saviour. It was on this ground that they were so easily induced to sell all their possessions and give the produce to those vagabond preachers. The New Testament has frequent allusions to this immediate second coming of their saviour. I select one from the first epistle to the Thessalonians.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

It is evident that the writer of the foregoing expected it before death. This circumstance gave much force to the progress and spreading of the Christian religion.

I might select a great variety of objectionable matter from the several epistles in this book, but the peculiar circumstances of this country at this moment induces me to draw this subject to a close. There is more important game in view. Like every other part of the Old and New Testament these epistles have a few moral precepts interspersed with much disgusting matter. It is those and not the gospels that have formed the groundwork of what is called Christianity in the present day. There are parts of them to which I would defy definition or any conclusion or inference whatever. I am inclined to think they were written in the latter part of the second century, when some of the Grecian philosophers had imbibed the new religion of Christianity, as they abound in the mysterious re-

series of the Platonic style of writing, particularly the epistle to the Romans. The epistle to the Hebrews I have not noticed, it might be called an epitome of the Old Testament, by which the Jews are enticed to substitute the new religion for the law of Moses. It is generally believed to have been the writing of a distinct person from those who wrote the other Epistles. The style is altogether different and peculiar.

I might have written a volume of ridicule on the book of Revelations but under present circumstances I am induced to pass it by, saying, that it is extremely ridiculous. This is not the only book of Revelation that the early Christians had among them they were as frequent as the Gospels and Epistles. It is high time that we began to seek something more substantial than those dreams and visions, unless we content ourselves with being deluded by those reveries as a pleasing insanity which I cannot admit for a moment. I have a thorough conviction on my mind, that every species of religion, that has been in practice in any age or country whatever, has been founded either by imposture, or in error and false notions. Under this conviction, I have as thoroughly purged my mind of this dross; and the delight I feel from it makes me pass my time in a prison as light as the most careless or the most happy men out of it. I cannot say that I have ever a dull moment, although my situation is that of solitary confinement. I am further impressed with a conviction that religion instead of producing, becomes the bane of morality. Moral virtue is the only essential by which man should regulate his actions in society, and I am certain that whilst the laws of this or of any other country enforce opinions by pains and penalties they will increase hypocrites and persecutors, but not moral men. I have seen a list of the names of those who were last year the acting Committee of the Vice Society, and wherever I could trace the private character of either of them I found it to be bad. Wilberforce and Gambier were two of them, and two more hateful hypocrites never broke bread. I feel nothing like personal anger towards any member of that Society as I have made a tool of them, so far, in my attack on superstition, and I hope to have further connections with them yet. They have given a force to my inclinations and dispositions much beyond what I had even hoped when I began my deistical publications, and I hope they will not desert me whilst they have any means of assisting.

I come now to close my account with Mr. Horne, or rather with the gentleman who sent me his book. I broke off from

the review where Mr. Horne asserts that all the histories the Bible contains are credible. I can only answer now, after what I have written on that subject, that if they are credible to him they are by no means so to me. It does not merit the title of history ; it is a collection of fables in which some of the incidents mentioned might have occurred, but the only proof of any thing of the kind is, that we have the sect of Jews existing to this day, and they will exist for ever whilst they are treated as outcasts in society, and never intermarry with other sects. The Quakers are equally distinct or more so, and it is exactly on the same ground of confining their marriages within their own sect, or excluding those, who dissent from this practice. If intolerance could be justified on any ground, it would be on that of preventing these distinctions and arbitrary rules in associations, for I verily believe that they are injurious, and ever will be to the general mass of mankind. It leads to a monopoly of interests, and is just as if one nation was to say to another, I will send my merchant ships into your ports, but you shall not send yours into mine. It is a narrowed-minded and bigotted policy, which should be banished from the whole human race. Masonic and Odd Fellows Societies are on the same base, but not so open and visible : still the injury and influence to the whole of a community is the same.

With respect to the credibility of the fables in the Bible, I believe I can say but little more to Mr. Horne: he of course takes all for Gospel : swallows every thing from the wonderful ark and deluge to the wonderful Jonah and the whale, the wonderful turning of Lot's wife to a pillar of salt, and the wonderful conception of a virgin through the ear or the mouth. I have another idea to state about Lot's wife, which is an original, I believe, as I can say, that I have not borrowed it from any person. This pillar of salt must have been a tradition, and its existence is far from being improbable, it might have been raised as a monument of gratitude from time to time, for salt is an important article to the preservation of human life, at least, its importance in the preservation of food is very great. Now the Dead Sea, or Lake Aspheltites, close by where this pillar of salt is said to have stood, is so deeply impregnated with salt, that travellers have asserted, if you dip your boot into it, it would come out encrusted. As a token of gratitude, or perhaps as an idol, the figure of a woman might have been moulded with salt, than which nothing is more easy, and this might have given rise

to the fable about Lot's wife. I believe nothing about the five cities which are said to have been swallowed up by the opening of this Lake as tradition abounds every where. Every village in England has its peculiar miraculous stories; but in my accounting for the pillar of salt there is nothing improbable, and the reader has it nearly as cheap as myself, and he may do as he likes with it. I have no wish that he should believe it.

If I have failed in any one thing of my promise, in going through the Bible, it has been in my assertion that I would show that the Jews knew nothing of letters until after the Babylonish captivity. I may not have cleared up this point, for I must confess that my evidence was not strong enough to carry conviction to another mind, although, I have not a doubt myself. Even what is called the *Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah* carries a proof with it of having been compiled at Babylon, or after the return of the Jews from that place, and surely if the Jews had possessed any written documents before, the *Chronicles of their Kings* might have been supposed to have been them. The reader must judge for himself on this head, I hope in a short time (say two or three years), to re-write the whole of the *Commentary on the Bible*, and print it as a *Companion*. I shall then be able to enlarge, and to correct many errors both of my own, and what the *Printer* has imposed upon me. I have been for several weeks past anxious to draw it to a close, for reasons before stated, and which has made me more brief than I should have been, if domestic affairs had been in a different state. I present the whole to the reader as a rough sketch of a book which, in my opinion, is wanted above all others, and I hope and trust, that if any thing should prevent my republishing it as a volume, some more able person will see the necessity of correcting and enlarging upon it. I am certain, from my own experience, that the more this book, called the *Bible*, be submitted to candid and rational criticism, the more contempt will be felt towards it. I believe I can say now that there is not a letter in it that has escaped my notice, and that at the mention of any subject contained in it, I could refer to it in a moment. It is the difficulty of making any sense or meaning to so great a portion of it that has puzzled so many weak minds, and has made them fancy that there was some supernatural power required to endow them with the comprehension of it, particularly as this notion has been taught by Priests in all countries. It has been said, that the close assimilation of the *New Testa-*

ment to the Prophecies of the Old is a proof of the genuineness and divine authority of them both: but, be it remembered, that the fabricators of the New Testament, or of the Christian religion, had the Old Testament to work by. It was that anxious expectation of the Messiah that wrought fanaticism to such a pitch as to fabricate the story of Jesus and his Disciples, and it is but natural that the Old Testament should have formed the ground work; though if the quotations in the New Testament from the Old be rationally examined, it will be found that they are distorted, and that they no more apply to the subject for which they are used, than they apply to any thing about me. The whole of the ground work of the Christian religion may be found in the second book of Esdras, and whoever fabricated that book, fabricated the Christian religion, unless it be a work of a later date than the origin of Christianity, which I should not think. I was astonished at reading it, for I had never read it with attention before. In the same manner all the miracles attributed to Jesus, are but a repetition of the performances of Elijah and Elisha. I am morally and naturally certain that the grounds of the Christian religion are so slender, that the moment it ceases to be protected by penal laws it will fall to the ground. I am inclined to think that another half century will see it expire all over the face of the earth.

Mr. Horne in a note has expressed great fear that Christianity is losing ground in North America; he may be quieted on this head, and safely lay the scene of his fears nearer home. The United States of America will become the hot bed of fanaticism when England has banished it from her shores. Even at this moment fanaticism rages more in America than it does in England. A great portion of the inhabitants of the United States set their face against Paine for writing the Age of Reason, but their descendants will execrate their stupidity. It is a singular fact, that the Age of Reason is as much suppressed in America as it is in England, and I doubt whether a dozen copies could be found for sale in all the States. In England it is suppressed only from the fear of the law, in America it is suppressed by public opinion!

Fanaticism seems to travel like the plague, one country is no sooner free from it than we hear of another infected. It has all the properties of the plague, save that it lingers in the human body without inflicting immediate destruction, but of the two, the plague, of whatever species, is much to be preferred. Those who were called Priests and Prophets among

the Jews, those who acted as Priests and Priestesses in the various Pagan Temples, and to the various Oracles, and those who speak in the name of Jesus Christ, are all acting upon the same principle—the common pest of religious fanaticism and imposture.

It has been asserted by some writers, that although man is made for truth, all truths are not made for man. This I take to be a very erroneous idea. Truth is but a very simple thing, and such as the human mind when incorrupt is always capable of receiving. The danger lies in corrupting the mind for a number of years, and then immediately to attack all its prejudices with the truth: it becomes irritated, not only at being disturbed, but with the reluctant idea of acknowledging that it has been so long in error. Thus Mr. Addison, in his evidences of Christianity, brings up an argument that the Pagan writers admitted that the Devils fled at the name of Jesus. If Mr. Addison had lived to the present day, we might have challenged him to prove the existence of such animals as Devils have been depicted to be, then it would have been time enough to pay attention to what Pagan writers or Christian writers had said about them. Again, I say, that the word Devil, is but a word, and not a being, or if so I defy him to make his appearance to me.

I have ever considered Christianity, in courts and palaces, to be a mere convenience, and never practised with sincerity. It is evidently a religion too degrading for a monarch to act up to its principles, and to retain, at the same time, what is called dignity: we have had many proofs of that by the conduct of the Pope and other priests, towards weak-minded kings. It is well known that although Constantine, the Roman Emperor, embraced the Christian Religion with a great deal of professed sincerity; still he continued to act as supreme pontiff, in performing the Pagan rites. He was the head of both churches at once! But the Christians played the more insidious part with him, and got him to side with them, and to root out every volume that had been written by Roman writers, in opposition to their religion, both as to its origin and progress.

We have another anecdote on record, of a king of the Franks, soon after he had been converted to Christianity. A priest was laying down to him, in a very piteous manner, how Jesus had been crucified by the Jews. After listening a few minutes, the King, drawing his sword in a passion, observed, if I had been there with a few of my fellows, we would have

cut those rascally Jews in pieces, and have saved the SON OF GOD ! The priest blushed for himself, and was obliged to talk about the necessity of the Son of God dying in this manner, for our sins, to make out a story to reconcile the mind of the prince to the measure !

I have now merely to tell Mr. Horne that the book of nature is the book of books, and all that cannot be tried by the test of nature and reason, must, sooner or later, be rejected as false. It is the bounden duty of man to reject all books that contain notions contrary to the known laws of nature, in whatever name they may appear. A successful imposture is not the less an imposture, neither can time sanctify it : sooner or later it must find exposure, and fall. Every system of religion has been alike calculated to stupify and brutalize the mind of man. It is entirely a weed in society, and the sooner it be plucked up the better will be the future growth and strength of society. It has nothing to do with morality—they are distinct principles and opposites which cannot be made to amalgamate.

I end by repeating what I began with, that if a man talks about refuting Deism, he must necessarily assume Atheism as a principle, which it is not, nor cannot be made so. It is however, the only word that seems to stand opposed to Deism on one side, as Tritheism (Christianity) or Polytheism, is on the other. The word God is but an idle word, and is bandied about without a single idea being connected with it, more than any other word whatever. It is time that we dropped words of sound, and dealt only in words of meaning, as a more substantial commodity. We have been hitherto cutting each others throats about something more insignificant than a shadow, of which all our ideas are borrowed from books, and beyond printed paper we cannot raise an idea upon the subject, **CHRISTIAN, JEW, MAHOMETAN, OR ATHEIST, I OFFER YOU THE HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.**

Conclusion of Reply to Mr. Horne's Pamphlet.